

## CATEGORIZATION OF PROVERBS IN ACHEBE'S A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this study is to categorize all proverbs in Achebe's A Man of the People in terms of forms of proverbs and examine their contributions to the development and meaning of the text. The study is anchored on theories of classical categorization and Systemic Functional Grammar. Identified types include synonymous, antithesis, metaphor, integral, if-then statement, single statement of fact, comparative and parabolic. Integral proverbs are greater in number giving the impression of completeness in meaning and structure. 'Synonymous and antithesis' as parallel structures are used by Achebe to draw attention of readers to certain significant aspects of the novel, makes his book attractive for linguistic analysis and increase the readability of his writing. 'Metaphor' makes Achebe's message interesting. 'If – then statement' is used to instill discipline to readers and the general public and 'Single statement of fact' to create punch, make points, summarize and clarify issues raised in the text. All these show that proverbs used in the book are essential to the development and meaning of the book.*

**KEYWORDS:** Proverbs, Systemic Functional Grammar, Synonymous, Antithesis, Metaphor, Integral

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### INTRODUCTION

Understanding and appreciating the message of the writer is determined by examining the author's use of language. There are certain genres and cultural elements or culture- related communication strategies that African literary artists often embrace in their writing. Such genres and culture - related communication strategies include proverbs. In this study, the researcher wants to categorize these proverbs and determines how these categories have helped in the development and understanding in one of the novels of Achebe, *A Man of the People*.

A proverb is a traditional saying that expresses a perceived truth based on common sense or experience. Proverb is defined by (Cuddon, 1984) as a short pithy saying which embodies a general truth. Again, a prominent proverb scholar in the United States, Wolfgang Mieder, defines a proverb as a short, generally known sentence of the folks which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorial form and which is handed down from generation to generation (Mieder, 2004). From these definitions one can make out the following attributes of proverbs to include: (i) a short pithy statement with universal truth value. (ii) a proverb shares measure of similarity with maxims and aphorisms in the nature of their form and content (iii) it is an embodiment of common sense that captures generations of human experiences (iv) it adds intensity to a given discourse (v) most proverbs are apocryphal or have no known author. The richness of the language of African literary texts is sometimes determined by how well the literary artists have

manipulated the use of this genre which is integral elements in African culture and folklore. This element has become significant in the growth and development of African literature and in the portrayal of meaning assigned by the artist. It has helped in the nourishment of the literature in the African continent in prose fiction. The aim of this paper is to categorize all the proverbs in Achebe's *A Man of the People* and determines how these categories have helped in the development and understanding of the meaning employed by the writer.

### Forms of Proverbs

Some forms of proverbs have been recorded. Augsburg (2011) presented the types of proverb as meaning repeated, meaning contrasted, meaning developed, single statement, metaphor, descriptive lists, and if-then statement while Yandian (2016) has his own division as synonymous, antithesis, synthesis, integral, parabolic, and comparative. Both divisions are based on the structure of proverbs and although are given different names they are the same to some extent. 1) Synonymous is the same thing as 'meaning is repeated' of Augsburg. It means that the second line expresses the same thought as the first but in different ways. Example: He grew rapidly like a yam tendril in the rainy season, and was full of the sap of life (TFA P. 42). 2) Antithesis means meaning contrasted. Here, a thought is given in the first line, and the negative result is given in the second line. In other words, if you do this you will be blessed, but if you don't, this is what will happen to you. So the negative line really accentuates the positive one. Example, Eneke the bird says that since men have learnt to shoot without missing, he has learnt to fly without perching (TFA 17). 3) Synthesis means that each line teaches a different thought. At first, it sounds like two lines saying something exactly the opposite, or saying two totally different things, but they do have something in common. Example, "whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool" (proverb 10: 18). 4). Integral means 'meaning is developed'. Here, the second line completes the thought of the first line. In other words, it almost sounds like there is only one line. The whole thing flows. Example: I cannot live on the bank of a river and wash my hands with spittle (TFA 132). 5) Metaphor: This uses striking images that compare one thing or person to another. Example: I am evil forest, I am Dry-meat-that-fills-the-mouth, I am fire that burns- without- faggots (TFA 75). 6) Comparative: Here, the first line expresses something better than the second. The key word in a comparative proverb is the word better. Example: Amalinze was a willy craftman, but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water (TFA 3). 7) Single statement: These proverbs don't use any form of parallel. They are short, simple statement of truth or warning. Examples: A toad does not run in the day time for nothing (TFA 16). A child cannot pay for its mother's milk (TFA 133). 8) Parabolic: Here, the first line of the proverb illustrates the second. The second line is the teaching; the first line is an analogy. Example: As the dog says, if I fall down for you and you fall down for me, it is play (TFA 58). 9) If – then statement: Here, the second part explains the consequences of doing or not doing something. Example: Let the kite perch and let the egret perch too. If one says no to the other, let his wing break (TFA 15). But some scholars such as Sharpin (2001 cited in Adjandeh) have tried to classify proverbs into such categories as adages, aphorisms, apophthegms, clichés, commonplaces, dicta, epigrams, exempla, gnomes, maxims, precepts, saws and sayings.

Adjandeh (2014) classified proverbs into verbal and non-verbal proverbs. According to her the verbal proverbs include those in the form of folktales, proverb-names, praise-proverbs, proverb-riddles and proverbs used in songs. She states that apart from the verbal ways in which proverbs are presented or conveyed, a proverb idea may be expressed through non-verbal ways such as through drum languages, paintings, drawings and sculptures. Doran (1982 cited in Adjandeh) attests to the fact that among the Akans for instance, nearly all their visual arts such as Adinkra symbols, gold weights, names of cloths etc have a traditional proverbial interpretation.

For the sake of this study, the researcher intends to categorise proverbs in Achebe's *A Man of the People* a composed form of proverbs from Augsburg (2011) and Yandian (2016). Therefore, these proverbs is categorised into synonymous, antithesis, metaphor, integral, synthesis, comparative, single statement of fact, parabolic, and if –then statement. This is choosing because it is clearer, understandable, and the division is based on the structure of these proverbs.

### **A Brief Account of a *Man of the People***

*A Man of the People* (1966) is a novel by Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. Written as a satirical piece, *A Man of the People* is a story told by Odili, a young and educated narrator, on his conflict with Chief Nanga, his former teacher who enters a career in politics in an unnamed fictional 20th century African country. Odili represents the changing younger generation; Nanga represents the traditional West African customs, inspired by that of Achebe's native Nigeria. *A Man of the People* is a first-person account of Odili, a school teacher in a fictional country closely resembling post-colonial Nigeria. Odili receives an invitation from his former teacher, Chief Nanga, who is now the powerful but corrupt Minister of Culture. As Minister, Nanga's job is to protect the traditions of his country especially when he is known as 'a man of the people'. Instead, his position is used to increase his personal wealth and power that proves particularly alluring to Odili's girlfriend; she cheats on him with the minister. Seeking revenge, Odili begins to pursue the minister's fiancée. The book ends with a military coup, similar to the real-life coup organized by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, Major Adewale Ademoyega, Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna, Captain Chris Anuforo, Major Donatus Okafor, and Major Humphrey Chukwuka. Odili agrees to lead an opposition party in the face of both bribes and violent threats. Then there is a military coup.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical frameworks for this study are classical theory of categorisation and Systemic Functional Grammar.

#### **Classical Categorization**

This type of categorization dates back to the classical period in Greece. It was Plato and Aristotle that introduced the approach of grouping objects based on their similar properties. According to the classical view, categories should be clearly defined, mutually exclusive, and collectively exhaustive. This way, any entity of the given classification universe belongs unequivocally to one, and only one, of the proposed categories.

Classical theory is considered to be the 'defining attributes' theory. The idea is that a category can be defined by a set of attributes. Each attribute is singly necessary, which means that if an item does not have one of the attributes, it is not a member of that category, no matter what other attributes it does have. The set of attributes is all that is necessary to be a category member. If an item has all the attributes deemed sufficient, it is a member of that category, no matter what other attributes it does or does not have. This theory is important here as the categorizations of these proverbs are based on attributes of the forms stated earlier.

#### **Systemic Functional Grammar**

Systemic Functional Grammar is an approach to language developed largely by M.A.K. Halliday in the 1960's in the United Kingdom. The Halliday's tradition is more interested in the manner by which language is utilised in social settings so as to attain a specific target (O'Donnell, 2012 cited in Almurashi 2016). Great importance is placed on the function of language, such as what language is used for, rather than what language structure is all about and the manner by which it is composed (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2004). Halliday believed that linguistics should describe actual sentences with many

functions. In addition, he was concerned with the function of the sentence, or in other words, the writer's purpose in writing the sentence (Matthiessen & Halliday 2004). While Halliday had good reasons to believe that function and meaning can help shape form, however, he insisted that the central concern of linguistics should be the study of the language through meaning.

In SFG, a text is analyzed in four ways. They are as follows: Context, Semantics, Lexico-grammar, and Phonology. To begin with the context, context is classified as one of the central concerns, because it is integral to the overall process of making meaning. In fact, when language occurs in a context, it will relate to or is linked to a number of contexts (Matthiessen & Halliday 2004). They are:

- The Context of Culture.
- The Context of Situation.

Halliday models the context of situation, where the aspects of the context relate intimately to the language used to create text, in terms of three important strands (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2004): They are:

- Field: gives us an indication of the topic or what is being talked about.
- Tenor: gives us an indication of who is/are involved in the communication and the relationships between them.
- Mode: gives us an indication of what part the language is playing in the interaction and what form it takes (written or spoken).

These three Register variables are used to explain people's intuitive understanding that individuals use different resources, different kinds and different parts from the system of language (Matthiessen & Halliday 2004). Inside the language itself, the SFL describes a model with three levels as a tristratal model of language. They are as follows:

Discourse-Semantics has three meta functions. They are: Interpersonal meta functions, Ideational meta functions, and Textual meta functions.

Lexico-grammar includes both grammar and vocabulary in one stratum and represents the view of language in both lexis and grammar.

Phonology, orthography (or graphology) which refers to the sound system, the writing system, and the wording system (Eggins 2004).

SFL model proposes that human language has evolved to make three generalized kinds of meanings; they are: Experiential meanings (clause as representation), Interpersonal meanings (clause as exchange), and Textual meanings (clause as message) (Eggins: 2004).

The Experiential meanings are with the way reality is represented and the grammatical resources for construing our experience of the world around us, as to what is going on, who is involved in the going-on, and when, where, and how the goings-on are going on. One of its chief grammatical systems is classified as Transitivity (Matthiessen & Halliday: 2004).

### **Transitivity Includes a Number of Aspects**

The processes (in the verbal group)

The participants (human/non-human) who are participating in these processes in the noun group.

The circumstances in which the processes occur and the when, where, and how they take place in the prepositional phrase and adverbial group.

- The interpersonal meanings are concerned with the interaction between speaker(s) and addressee(s). It is used to establish the speaker's role in the speech situation and relationship with others. One of its main grammatical systems is Mood and Modality (Matthiessen & Halliday 2004).
- The textual meanings are concerned with the creation of text and the way we organize our meanings into the text that makes sense. One of the main textual systems is Theme and Rheme (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2004).

### Categorization of Proverbs in *a Man of the People*

**Table 1**

S/N	TYPES	PROVERB
1	Synonymous	If you thought that a sensible man would spit out the juicy morsel that good fortune placed in his mouth. P 2 When one slave sees another cast into a shallow grave, he should know that when the time comes he will go the same way 38 Some people's belly is like the earth, it is never so full that it will like to take another corpse. P 93 If I fall for you this time and you for me next time, then I know it is play not fight. P 136
2	Antithesis	It is better the water is spilled than pot broken. 30 A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time. P 40 It was like the man in the proverb who was carving the carcass of an elephant on his head and searching with his toes for a grasshopper. P77 My brother when those standing have not got their share you are talking about those kneeling. P 94 If I am not to grow bigger let me at least remain as small as I am. P96 Our people say: if you fail to take away a strong man's sword when he is on the ground, will you do it when he gets up...? I believe that the hawk should perch and the eagle perch, whichever says to the other don't, may its own wing break. P 134
3	Integral	They have bitten the finger with which their mother fed them. 6 In our country, a long American car driven by a white uniformed chauffeur and flying a ministerial flag could pass through the eye of a needle. P.60 When an old woman hears the dance she knows how to dance, she knows her old age deserts her. 72 As the saying goes, it is only when you are close to a man that you can begin to smell his breath. P 90 I have said that what the white man's money will bring about had not shown itself yet. P 91 When a mad man walks naked, it is his kinsmen who feel shame not himself. P 128 My people this is the boy who is thrusting his finger into my eyes. 151 Uneasy lays the head that wears the crown. P 65
4	metaphor	My in-law is like a bull he said and your challenge of a tick to a bull. The tick fills its belly with blood from the back of the bull and the bull doesn't even know it is there. He carried it wherever he goes – to eat, drink or pass ordure. Then one day the cattle egret comes, perches on the bull's back and picks out the tick....115 I felt a tingling glow of satisfaction spread over me as palm oil does on hot yam. P 117 He should tell them that we are waiting here like a babe cutting its first tooth: anyone who wants to look at our new tooth should know that his bag should be heavy. P 137 They have bitten the finger with which their mother fed them 6 Micah's handsomeness, which he likened to the perfect, sculpted beauty of a carved eagle, and his popularity which would be the envy of the proverbial traveller-to-distant-places who must not cultivate enmity on his route. P. 1.

**Table 1 Contd.,**

5	If...then statement	Our people have a saying that if you respect today's king, others will respect you when your turn comes. If alligator comes out of the water, one morning and tells you that crocodile is sick, can you doubt his story? P 132 If the very herb we go to seek in the forest now grows at our very back yard are we not saved the journey? P 137
6	Single statement of truth	Bad children that crunched their mother's skull. P 3 What money will do in this land wears a hat. P92 Josiah has taken away enough for the owner to notice. P 93 I see that you have grown too big for your coat. P 111 Koko has taken enough for the owner to see p 161
7	Parabolic	My in-law is like a bull he said and your challenge of a tick to a bull. The tick fills its belly with blood from the back of the bull and the bull doesn't even know it is there. He carried it wherever he goes – to eat, drink or pass ordure. Then one day the cattle egret comes, perches on the bull's back and picks out the tick....

### Frequency and Percentage of the Categorized Proverbs in Achebe's *a Man of the People*

**Table 2**

S/N	Total F& %	Synonymous F & %	Antithesis F & %	Integral F & %	Metaphor F& %	If... then F&%	Single Statement F & %	Parabolic F& %
1	33, 100%	4, 12.1%	7, 21.2%	8, 24.2%	5, 15.2%	3, 9.1%	5, 15.2%	1, 3%

### Implications of Proverbs in the Novels

The grouping of these proverbs among these nomenclatures: synonymous, antithesis, integral, metaphor, parabolic, if- then statement, and single statement of truth – is done based on structure of the proverb. It is important here to discuss some of the implications of some of these types of proverbs in the works under study.

### Synonymous and Antithesis

Synonyms and antithesis are parallel structures. Parallel structures are used in stylistics to refer to such kind of linguistic structures or patterns in literature to foreground certain significant items in literary texts. It is referred to the repetition of the same pattern. Wales (2001) observes that 'there is usually some obvious connection in meaning between the repeated units which reinforce the equivalence, but they need not be synonymous. Parallelism with contrast on antonymy is known as Antithesis'. Achebe has used these types of proverbs construction as rhetoric devices used for emphasis and memorability. For instance,

### Synonymous

- Some people's belly is like the earth, it is never so full that it will like to take another corpse. AMOP 93
- When one slave sees another cast into a shallow grave, he should know that when the time comes he will go the same way 38
- If I fall for you this time and you for me next time, then I know it is play not fight. P 136

### Antithesis

- It is better the water is spilled than pot broken. 30
- A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time. P 40
- It was like the man in the proverb who was carving the carcass of an elephant on his head and searching with his toes for a grasshopper. P77
- My brother when those standing have not got their share you are talking about those kneeling. P 94
- If I am not to grow bigger let me at least remain as small as I am. P96
- Our people say: if you fail to take away a strong man's sword when he is on the ground, will you do it when he gets up...?
- I believe that the hawk should perch and the eagle perch, whichever says to the other don't, may its own wing break. P 134

Let us take the above examples for analysis. In the examples of synonyms above, there are similarities between 'belly is like the earth & it is never full that it will take another corpse, between casting into shallow grave and he will go the same way, between falling this time and next and it is a play not fight.' The second clauses 'it is never full that it will take another corpse', 'he will do the same thing' and 'it is play not fight' are used to emphasis the first clauses. The same thing applies to antithesis, there are contrast between these 'clauses examples 'water spilled & pot broken', 'come in from rain, dried his body, put on dry clothes & than another who has been indoor all the time,' carving the carcass of an elephant on his head and searching with his toes for grasshopper, grow bigger and remain as small, when he is on ground and when he gets up, hawk perching and eagle perching. It is mainly through equivalence that parallelism achieves foregrounding. With the help of these parallelisms, Achebe explores the hidden similarities by stating the same things in different ways. For instance, in this proverb, 'some people's belly is like the earth, it is never so full that it will like to take another corpse' the first set of clause 'some peoples' belly is like the earth is reiterating about the greed of some politicians and it is repeated in the second part of the proverb by saying, 'it is never so full that it will take another corpse'. By using this he discovers those truths, which otherwise would have been impossible to launch forth. In this regard, Lesley Jefferies and Dan Macintyre (2010) observe that Parallelism is the other means by which foregrounding effect arises out of a repeated structure.

Achebe has used synonymous and antithesis (Parallelism) structures to serve as graphological device, because it presents many times the recurring shape of lines to the eyes of readers and so catches the attention of readers. He uses this technique to draw the readers to certain significant aspect of the novel by focusing on the dissimilar ideas in similar pattern. For instance, the antithesis hawk perch and eagle perch stress on inequality in the society. Achebe is advocating that all humans are equal and whoever says contrary should suffer. Paul Simpson (2004) agrees with the fact that as deviation is a violation of norms, parallelism is repetition of norms and it is an aspect of foregrounding. He observes

Foregrounding refers to form textual patterning which is motivated specifically for literary-aesthetic purposes. Capable of working at any level of language, foregrounding typically involves a stylistic distortion of some sort, either through an aspect of the text which deviates from a linguistic norm or, alternatively, where an aspect of text is brought to



the fore through repetition or parallelism. That means that foregrounding comes in two, main guises: foregrounding as deviation from a norm and foregrounding as more of the same.

One of the greatest benefits of parallelism is that each parallel structure enables readers to set equivalence between two or more elements. The pedagogical implication is that students may be asked to identify different linguistic equivalences in order to magnify their process of learning literature and language. By using parallel proverbs, Achebe has made his books attractive for linguistic analysis. Jeffries believes that teaching a literary text in a class may be made attractive by giving students tools of analysis that allow them to explain their reactions to literary text in explicit way. Jeffries (2011) observes

What a stylistic analysis of this kind tries to do is to evidence literary insights and interpretations by reference to the workings of the language. Most often, stylistics of poetry will draw upon the long-standing notions of foregrounding through deviation and parallelism to identify those features of style which are significant in a particular text. Once identified, these features need to be described accurately in linguistic terms and the literary effect linked to the particular linguistic choices that have been made by the texts writer.

Achebe also has used parallel structures to maintain consistency within his work, created a balance flow of ideas, clarity, and also employ it as tools for persuasion thereby increasing the readability of his writing. This is done by creating patterns and structures readers can follow easily. He uses it to create rhythm and to bring attention to an idea. It reinforces the overall message the writer wants to give to the reader.

The parallelism structure is one of the artistic features of discourse distinctively and artistically used by Achebe that makes his write-ups get a very tight, artistic fabric. He is good at employing some proverbial structure to achieve the high-degree meaning parallelism amongst its linguistic units which expose the organized structure extended inside his texts.

The parallelism structure proves the enormous quantity of Achebe's linguistic structures and his creative ability in forming a melodic language that results in aesthetic and denotative fields. These fields indicate to the writer's mastery of language which meets his artistic ambitions and desires and meets the desires of the audience, the newness and surprise. Achebe achieved rhythmical harmonies using both synonymous and antithesis parallelism. Parallel terms formed musical accessories and basic tones which created an interesting acoustic harmonious atmosphere based on qualitative and quantitative compatibility for sounds. They also achieved semantic goal by making this creative technique basically and closely related to the meaning where he deliberately intends to intensify these proverbial parallel structures and functioning units in a network revolving around the dominant idea.

### **Metaphor**

Metaphor, on the other hand, is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. It is a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else. A Metaphor is a figure of speech that makes an implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics. Achebe has used 15.2% of AMOP metaphoric proverbs to make his message more interesting and real. Like other forms of comparison, metaphoric proverbs have added powerful details to his writing. By bringing in sensory details in the form of metaphors, he has made his novels more interesting and real, and helped the readers imagine and even feel a scene or character. A good metaphor also exercises the reader's imagination – it helps him



or her see familiar concepts in a new way, or helps explain an otherwise vague topic. For instance,

- My in-law is like a bull he said and your challenge of a tick to a bull. The tick fills its belly with blood from the back of the bull and the bull doesn't even know it is there. He carried it wherever he goes – to eat, drink or pass ordure. Then one day the cattle egret comes, perches on the bull's back and picks out the tick....115
- I felt a tingling glow of satisfaction spread over me as palm oil does on hot yam. P 117
- He should tell them that we are waiting here like a babe cutting its first tooth: anyone who wants to look at our new tooth should know that his bag should be heavy. P 137
- Micah's handsomeness, which he likened to the perfect, sculpted beauty of a carved eagle, and his popularity which would be the envy of the proverbial traveller-to-distant-places who must not cultivate enmity on his route. P. 1.

In the above proverbs, Achebe has used the images of the 'tick and bull', 'palm oil and hot yam', 'a baby with a new tooth', 'sculpted beauty of a carved eagle', to appeal directly to the senses of readers, sharpening their imaginations to comprehend what is being communicated to them. 'Tick and bull' gives a life-like quality to the conversations and the characters of fiction. The character is seen as that strong man who was so powerful that there is nothing an ordinary man could do to affect him. Also by 'palm oil and yam' Achebe is comparing Odili's happiness to what happens when hot oil is poured on yam. 'a baby with a new tooth' signifies waiting to have something. Metaphors are also ways of thinking, offering the readers fresh ways of examining ideas and viewing the world. Metaphors sharpen our imaginations and bring a life-like quality to Achebe's novels. The metaphor makes us think in the abstract but also beautifully. It brings colour to our literature and our lives.

### Integral Proverbs

Integral like we said earlier, means meaning is developed. The second line completes the thought of the first line and sounds as if it is only one line. In this type of proverb, the first line is a concrete image which is then explained by the second line. For instance,

- They have bitten the finger with which their mother fed them. AMOP. P 6
- When an old woman hears the dance she knows how to dance, she knows her old age deserts her. 72
- As the saying goes, it is only when you are close to a man that you can begin to smell his breath. P 90
- I have said that what the white man's money will bring about had not shown itself yet. P 91
- When a mad man walks naked, it is his kinsmen who feel shame not himself. p 12
- My people this is the boy who is thrusting his finger into my eyes. 151
- Uneasy lays the head that wears the crown. p 65

In No 1 the second part, 'with which their mother fed them' explains the first line, they have bitten the finger. In No 2 & 3 'she knows her old age deserts her' and 'that you can begin to smell his breath' complete each first part. Integral proverbs are greater in number in the novel with 24.2%. This has given the books sense of completeness in meaning and structure. All the materials that make up the book including proverbs are important, necessary, fundamental, and essential to the development and meaning of the story.

### **If--Then Statements**

These types are used to give morals/ warning. The message is if you don't want this thing to happen to you, don't do this. If you do a thing of this nature, expect this kind of thing. Examples can be seen from the following proverbs:

- Our people have a saying that if you respect today's king, others will respect you when your turn comes. AMOP
- If alligator comes out of the water, one morning and tells you that crocodile is sick, can you doubt his story? AMOP P 132
- If the very herb we go to seek in the forest now grows at our very back yard are we not saved the journey? AMOP P 137

In the first proverb, Nanga is actually reminding the youth that they are the future leaders of tomorrow: that if they respect today's leaders, tomorrow they will be respected. The second is said by Odili's father when he learns that Odili's friend, Max, has taken money from the rival political party. Odili is in denial but this proverb is to emphasize that his father's source is close to the action. With the percentage of 9.1%, Achebe has used these 'if – then' proverbs to instil discipline to readers and the general population in terms of respect to elders, sincerity, and brotherhood.

### **Single Statement of Truth**

Most proverbs are long but sometimes the speaker would just make a single statement of fact. These types of proverbs are usually short. By shortening our proverbs, we give it power. For example, Josiah has taken away enough for the owner to notice for example, creates a sense of unforgiveness for crossing lines.

- Bad children that crunched their mother's skull. P 3
- What money will do in this land wears a hat. P92
- Josiah has taken away enough for the owner to notice. P 93
- I see that you have grown too big for your coat. P 111
- Koko has taken enough for the owner to seep 161

'Bad children that crunched their mother's skull' came with force to create tension about evil children. A single statement of fact proverb can also emphasise on a previous statement or sentence. For instance, in these two proverbs, 'what money can do on this land wears a crown and Josiah has taken enough for the owner to notice' emphasize an important issues – Josiah wants to make juju with the blind man's stick. A single statement of fact proverb is made of 9.5% and they are used in the works of Achebe to create punch and make points. There is always a natural pause after a sentence. This gives the other person space in which to consider what is said. Using shorter proverb gives the other person more time to pause and think about what is being said, creating a bigger impact. Following a long description, often in formal texts for example, short proverbs can be used to summarise and clarify what has gone before. For instance, no 1 proverb summarises the circumstances behind the birth of Odili whose mother died after his birth. No 2 and 3 clarifies about the incidence where Josiah wanted to do Juju with a blind man's stick. No 4 summarizes the boldness of Odili to context Nanga's position. No 5 explains the position of Max party members stance after Koko killed Max.

## CONCLUSIONS

Proverbs in Achebe's *A Man of the People* have been categorized into different types of proverbs to include: synonymous, antithesis, integral, metaphor, if then statement, single statement of fact, parabolic. Each type portrays different meanings to the novel. Synonymous and antithesis as parallel structures are used by Achebe to draw attention of readers to certain significant aspects of the novel, makes his book attractive for linguistic analysis, increase the readability of his writing, create rhythm to bring attention to his readers, gives the write-up a very tight, artistic fabrics,, and achieves semantic goals by making the creative technique related to the meaning. Metaphor makes his message interesting and real by adding powerful details. With metaphor his readers are made to feel a scene or character, exercises the readers imagination, helps the reader sees familiar concepts in a new way and to explain otherwise vague topic. It brings color to Achebe's literature. Integral type gives a sense of completeness in meaning and structure. It shows that proverbs used in the book are essential to the development and meaning of the book, If – then statement is used to instill discipline to readers and the general public in terms of respect to elders, sincerity, brother-hood and to desist from corruption. Single statement of fact is used to create punch, make points, summarize and clarify what has gone before.

The use of all these means that Achebe has used different types of languages to present issue of corruption raised in the book. He has strived to vary the structure of proverbs to create rhythmic prose and keep his readers interested.

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